



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

May 13, 2010

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Speaker and Mr. Leader:

We are gravely concerned that ongoing state and local budget challenges are threatening hundreds of thousands of teacher jobs for the upcoming school year, with estimates ranging from 100,000 to 300,000 education jobs at risk. Without swift action, millions of children will experience these budget cuts in one way or another through reductions in class time; cuts to early childhood programs, extracurricular activities, and summer school; and reduced course offerings as teachers are laid off. These budget cuts would also undermine the groundbreaking reform efforts underway in states and districts all across the country.

At the very same time as schools face these challenges, budget cuts to police and fire departments threaten to undermine public safety and the emergency readiness of first-responders. All of these budget cuts threaten to cause damage that ripples through the economy as a whole. The layoffs create a new drag on the economy when – despite the recent encouraging jobs report – we still have a long way to go.

We applaud Chairmen Harkin, Miller and Obey for crafting legislation in direct response to these challenges. S. 3206, the Keep Our Educators Working Act, H.R. 2847, the Jobs for Main Street Act, and H.R. 4812, the Local Jobs for America Act, each call for \$23 billion in emergency support to preserve education jobs modeled after the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This funding would keep teachers in the classroom while helping to sustain meaningful and necessary reforms in public education across the country.

We urge Congress to include this funding in the supplemental appropriations bills soon to be considered. We also urge Congress to include \$2 billion in support to localities for police and firefighters to ensure that our communities remain safe, as well as \$1 billion in funds for the Child Care and Development Block Grant to preserve early childhood education jobs and ensure that our youngest children do not lose the supports and services critical to their learning and overall well-being.

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Thank you for your consideration of these views. The Obama Administration looks forward to working with Congress to refine this legislation as it moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

/s/

Arne Duncan

cc: Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Honorable Tom Harkin
Honorable David Obey
Honorable George Miller